



Jeremy W. Denning, M.D.

Minimally Invasive Decompression: Post-Operative Instructions

Incision Care

- Usually, stitches are beneath the surface of your skin. (You may not get stitches).
- Your dressing will be a clear adhesive. It should start to peel off a week or two. (If not, okay to remove it yourself).
- You may shower, but no tub baths.
- You must keep your incision(s) dry for 2 days following your surgery.

Pain

You may still have some pain, numbness or tingling in your back, hips or leg(s). This should decrease gradually as the nerves heal. An ice pack may be used on the incision to reduce swelling and pain.

Brace Instructions

- You must wear your brace at all times when out of bed.
- You must take it off to shower. Remember to cover your incision if staples are still in place.
- Your physician will determine when you are ready to wean out of your brace, but you are usually in the brace for 3 months.

Call Our Office

If you ...

- Feel severe pain, weakness or numbness in your leg(s).
- Notice swelling larger than a lemon or bloody drainage more than a tablespoon or any clear fluid from incision.
- Have a fever of 101°F or greater.
- Have a new problem controlling your bladder or bowel.

Medication

- If you were given a Medrol Dosepak (steroid/ anti-inflammatory medication) you may notice a slight increase in the above symptoms, as the Medrol Dosepak decreases. This is due to swelling and irritation around the nerve and will improve as you heal. Complete the full course of Medrol according to the instructions in the package. Common side effects of steroids may include, but are not limited to, GI upset, insomnia and anxiety.
- You will be given a prescription for pain medicine when you are discharged from the hospital. Take as directed on the prescription. **Do not drive, operate machinery or drink alcoholic beverages while taking this medication.**
- You may have been given a prescription for muscle relaxants (to reduce spasms or tightness in your back). This medication may make you drowsy. **Do not drive, operate machinery or drink alcoholic beverages while taking this medication.**
- Medications will be refilled during normal business hours (8:30 am – 5:00 pm, Monday – Thursday and 8:30 am – 12:30 pm Friday) as the physician on call cannot renew prescriptions.



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Activity

First Week:

- Avoid bending or twisting from the waist.
- Do not lift over 5 pounds until release to do so.
- Limit auto travel. Passenger only. No driving.
- Walk around the house for first couple of days after surgery. Then you may begin to walk outside for short periods 1 to 2 blocks per day. Do not overdo it. Use your walker/cane if recommended.
- Avoid house and yard work. You may cook but do not lift more than 5 pounds until release to do so.
- To sleep you may lie on you back or side, but not on your abdomen.
- Take a nap or at least rest in the morning and again in the afternoon.

Second Week:

- Increase walking distance as tolerated, working up to 1 mile per day.
- Take a nap or at least rest in the morning and again in the afternoon.
- Continue bending, twisting, and lifting restrictions.
- You may begin driving short distances, no more than 30 minutes. Make certain your seat, mirrors and restraints are properly adjusted.

Third Week:

- Increase walking distance as tolerated.
- You may be up and about as tolerated.
- Begin light housework. Do not sweep or vacuum. Stop for frequent breaks. Use good body mechanics.
- Continue bending, twisting, and lifting restrictions.

Follow- Up Appointment

Your first post-op appointment should be 3 weeks from your surgery. Please call early to get a convenient appointment time.

Return to work

Return to work varies with the type of occupation and will be discussed at your follow-up appointment.